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162, 166, 619, 101, 622, 361, 438

/For an account of the settled tribes of Oman and the Trucial Coast in 1920--territory occupied, rulers, brief history, their settlements, means of livelihood, etc. see 30: Great Britain, Saudi Arabia MJ1, category 116, pp. 546-602./

CHAPTER VI

THE last war of any importance, as I have stated, was that between Sharjah and Dubai in 1940. The cause of the war was a long-standing feud between the tribes of Bani Yas (Dubai) and Qasimi (Sharjah). There was also a dispute over territorial limits claimed by the sheikhs. The sheikhdom of Dubai is composed of two distinct districts; Dubai town proper, on the west of the creek, and Dera, on the north side. The largest and better-built houses, mostly inhabited by Indian and Persian merchants, as well as the more important shops of the pearl brokers, carpet sellers and gold-smiths, are situated in Dubai town. Here one finds cool, clean narrow streets with high walls, often overhung with Persian rugs to keep off the sun, and pleasant open shops where one may buy anything from a five hundred years' old Bokhara rug or a brass-bound Quaiti chest, to an American wrist-watch or a roll of bread. In the poorer section of Dera, where the fishermen and coolies live, there is a native bazaar and several long streets of shops, but these are dirty, dark and infested with flies. There one may buy items of gaudy Arab clothing, tobacco leaves, and dried food, including fish, spices, nuts, ghee butter, henna bark and rice. Some alley-ways are devoted entirely to silversmiths and tinsmiths; the latter are clever craftsmen and can make almost any domestic utensil out of an empty petrol can.

For several hundred years Dubai (which includes, besides the town, several villages and a tract of desert of about fifty square miles), has been ruled by the Al Bu Falaah branch of the Bani Yas clan, who are related to another Al Bu Falaah family, the sheikhs of Abu Dhabi (the 'Place of Gazelles'). Rivalry between the sheikhs of Dubai and their cousins in Dera, on the other side of the creek, may be traced back as far as 1850, when the Ak Bu Mahair family, their cousins, intrigued for ownership of the region. The Mahair were notorious pirates. A British gunboat had occasion to land a ship's crew at Dera to investigate an attack on a merchant ship in Dubai waters. Soon after the sailors from the gunboat had landed they were waylaid in a dark side street and murdered; as a

619 reprisal, the gunboat shelled Dera Town, destroying many houses
622 and killing several of the inhabitants. The British Government then confirmed Maktum bin Buti, of the Bani Yas tribe, as Sheikh of the whole of Dubai, including Dera. Since then there has been unmitigated rivalry between the two houses.

622 The present ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Said bin Maktum, a grand-
721 son of Maktum bin Buti, is a peaceably disposed ruler, but his wife, Husa, or Umm Raschid (mother of Raschid) is a combination of Catharine the Great and Boadicea, and is ambitious into the bargain for her two sons, Raschid and Khalifa. In 1940, following an intrigue against the Sheikh of Dubai, a member of the Mahair family was obliged to flee from Dubai and took refuge with the Sheikh of Sharjah, claiming his protection. Husa demanded that he be handed over to her, but this Sultan bin Saqr resolutely refused to do, contending that such an act was against all the traditions of his race. Feeling between Sharjah and Dubai had run rather high for several years, partly over a dispute as to which sheikh should have suzerainty over Hera, a minor sheikhdom, and partly because Sheikh Said bin Maktum disputed Sultan bin Saqr's succession to the sheikhdom of Sharjah.

The war which broke out over this incident lasted for several months, and was mainly guerilla in its tactics, although siege was laid to Dubai and the town was gallantly and successfully defended under the generalship of Husa herself, an event almost unparalleled in Arab history. It appeared that her husband had not wanted a war at all, and had tried to persuade his ministers to call a conference with Sultan bin Saqr and settle their quarrel by negotiation. This move not proving successful, the Sheikh of Dubai shut himself up in his room and refused to see anyone. His sons were not keen on fighting, either, and Raschid the elder, a pleasant, cultured man of thirty, continued his life of social ease, visiting his gardens by motor-car, adding to his collection of wives, and smoking his tiny-stemmed pipe. Husa was so infuriated by their indifference that she tore the veil from her face, donned sword and trousers, and took command of the fort and the army.

721 The total number of casualties on both sides numbered only about two hundred, dead and wounded, and at length the offices of the British Government were sought to mediate between the contestants. If the matter had been adjudicated by a court of arms, the laurels would probably have gone to Sharjah, which did much material damage to Dubai Town. At any rate, the peace

2: O'Shea G-3 (1944-1945) 1947 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4

which they smoke in tiny pipes with cane stems. The sheikh also collects 'protection' money from the neighbouring sheikhs, in return for which the Beni Quitab guarantee not to molest the tribesmen. Should this money not be forthcoming, however, a raid on the nearest town or village is a foregone conclusion; then slaves and camels will be stolen, to be sold later in the Baraimi market.

Tandy reported that he had detected a trail of smoke in the distance, so we decided to keep on our course. Eventually we reached a fenced-in enclosure, at one end of which was a low clay wall; leaning against the wall was an aged, toothless Arab. For a few leaves of tobacco he agreed to lead us to the *Badu* encampment. To our surprise it lay but a hundred yards to our right, screened from view by a hedge of scrubs. As we approached the goats'-skin tents of the tribesmen, a group of armed men calmly awaited us.

'Praise be to Allah! And who may you be?' enquired the elder of the guards.

'Praise be to Allah, and peace be on your heads!' replied Tandy, in his best Arabic, holding out his hand as a token of friendship. 'We come from the British Government, and are friends of Sheikh Mohammed bin Ali—may the blessings of Allah give peace to his old age! We desire you to take us to him.'

The guards nodded gravely at this speech and, hedging us in on either side, conducted us towards the main tent. There was a curious air of silence about the encampment; none of the occupants came out to stare at us and the only signs of activity were some chickens and goats in a pen, and the tethered camels which snarled as we passed. As we waited outside the flap of the tent opened and Hadi, the sheikh's son, emerged. He greeted Sheikh Hamid as an old friend and was introduced by him to Jasim, Tandy and the remainder of the party. Hadi expressed surprise at the visit, which he said was unexpected; his father and the older members of the tribe were asleep, and the others were out hunting.

The tent, which he invited us to enter, was a small, ramshackle affair of goats'-hair and sacking tied over *gharf* branches; a cheap Dubai mat lay on the floor. No sooner were we seated than the local notables came in to meet us and we had to rise on each occasion, nearly knocking the tent over as we did so. At length they were all assembled, seated around the floor in a circle. With twenty men in such a small space the atmosphere soon became suffocatingly hot, and the situation was not improved by the hundreds of flies

30: Gt. Britain G-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
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133 The coast on the Gulf of Oman is bolder, the hills sometimes coming down to the water's edge, and the hilly tract inland, perhaps 20 miles in breadth, is the highest part of the whole territory. The interior of Trucial Oman, approached from the Persian Gulf, consists of a low and sandy maritime plain (*taff*) almost entirely unsuited for tillage, though not without natural vegetation and even wood, and provided with enough wells and water-holes to support a scanty Bedouin population. Beyond the *taff* are inland plains containing tracts with occasional cultivation, of which *Jiri*, *Dheid*, and *Liwah* are the best known.

Climate

132 Between November and April the heat is bearable and the nights are cool. From May to September the climate is excessively hot. The rainfall, which is confined to the winter months, is believed to be about 5 in., and would therefore approximate to that of Bahrein (see p. 312).

Population

162 619 The ethnology of the tribes inhabiting Trucial Oman is often intricate and perplexing. The tribes which are numerically the most important are the following:

Beni Yās, in the Abu Dhabi Principality (10,000 settled, 2,000 nomadic); Sharqiyīn, in the *Shameilīyah* tract and *Ras el-Kheimah* district in the Oman promontory (7,000 settled); Āl 'Ali, chiefly at *Umm el-Qaiwein* (6,750 settled); Āl Bu Maheir, in all coast towns (5,500); Sūdān, in coast towns and *Bu Mūsa* Island (5,000); Na'īm, in Central Oman promontory (3,500 settled and 1,200 nomad); Za'āb, in *Jezīrat el-Hamra* and *Khōr Kalba* in the Shārjah Principality (3,500); Ahl Ras el-Kheimah, in the town and district of that name (2,000); Shihūh (2,500) and Taneij (2,500 settled and 1,500 nomad), in the same places; Beni Qitab (2,000 nomad), in Shārjah territory; Shweihiyīn (2,000), in *Dibai* and *Shārjah*. Several of these tribes are also represented in the Sultanate of Oman, in El-Qatar, and in Bahrein. In addition may be mentioned 1,500 *Hūwalah* in *Shārjah* town; 1,400 Baluchis at *Dibai*; about 2,500 Persians in *Abu Dhabi* and *Dibai* towns, *Khōr Fakkān* and *Ghāllah*; some hundreds of Hindus in the coast towns, and numerous negro slaves.

162 665 795 The total population has been estimated at over 80,000 only 8,000 being nomadic. The people are divided between the Hināwi

63:Simmons et al G-6 (1941-1951) 1954
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GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

/3/ Trucial Oman is today one of the least-known sections of Arabia, but in former times it was notorious as the "Pirate Coast." The territory stretches from the Masandam promontory to Qatar, with a coastline of about 50 miles on the Gulf of Oman, from Khor al Kalba to Dibba, and of roughly 360 miles on the Persian Gulf, from Ras ash Shaam to Khor al Odaid, near the neck of the Qatar peninsula. A small enclave around Ras Masandam is under the suzerainty of the Sultan of Muscat. Inland, the frontiers extend to the Rub' al Khali desert, the "Empty Quarter" of Arabia, where the boundaries have not been clearly defined. /17 The region known as Trucial Oman comprises 7 independent sheikhdoms, each

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p. 311(A)

63:Simmons et al G-5 (1941-1951) 1954
M1 Middle East
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named for its main town—Sharja, Ras al Khaima, Umm al Quwain, 'Ajman, Dibai (Dubai) and Abu Dhabi, on the Persian Gulf, and Kalba on the Gulf of Oman. The ruling sheikhs have had protective treaty agreements with Great Britain since 1853. At that time, a truce was declared between the British government and the different principalities which put an end to piracy in these waters and earned them the designation of the "Trucial States."

The east coast is mountainous, with hills rising abruptly from the Gulf of Oman, but most of the Persian Gulf littoral is low and sandy. The coast is bordered by salt creeks and lagoons, many of which unite inland to form mangrove swamps, while numerous reefs and islands stud the shallow waters

p. 311(b)

Category 621-721

MK4 Trucial Oman
Card 008